

Bygones by twowritehands

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Summary:

On the drive to visit Terry Ives, Joyce recalls a high school memory, and she and Hopper have a moment. A missing scene.

Bygones

Author's Note:

I was given the prompt "Jim Hopper's was the first dick Joyce ever saw" and went with it.

Terry Ives lived a couple of towns over. They decided the Chief of Police Jeep was too ostentatious so Joyce let Hopper drive her pinto. She smirked as he folded his long and heavy frame behind the wheel. Even adjusting the seat all the way back, his knees still nearly brushed the dash.

"We should fill up before we get on on the road," Hopper said, noting the gas hand's low tilt.

Joyce had blown her advance on flyers, Christmas lights, phones, cigarettes, and funeral shoes, but when he pulled up to the pump, Jim never asked her for the cash. He climbed out and set to pumping the gas. She slouched back in her seat, happening to catch an eyeful of Hopper's crotch in his jeans as he moved past the driver's side window.

Averting her eyes, Joyce couldn't help but to remember that Jim Hopper's had been the first dick she had ever seen.

Raised by a grandmother who came of age in the thirties, never missed church, and never uttered a dirty word, seventeen year old Joyce had questions and urges and no answers. Just Lonnie and the nerve to sneak out and figure things out on her own.

It was a school night when she snuck out and went parking with Lonnie. They kissed and she liked that. They lay across the backseat and their bodies slid together and she liked that, too.

But then something showed up. A hard ridge in his trousers. Persistent. She understood anatomy and had worked out on her own where things went but the bulge was way bigger than her finger.

Panic clenched her chest. Her heavy breathing fogged the glass. Lonnie

seemed to really like it. Instead of asking what was wrong, he grunted and opened his pants with one hand, pushing up her skirt with the other. Joyce had a sudden vision of him just cramming himself into her and she heard her grandmother's voice talking about fallen women.

The cold hand of panic closed her throat entirely. She wrestled out from under Lonnie (only managing by opening the door she leaned on and spilling out shoulders first.) Hiking up the side of her drawers Lonnie had managed to claw down, she bolted from the old car.

The sun was setting over the quarry; everything was so pretty in the golden and pink light. She didn't see any of it in her frenzy. Instinct had her run towards the next sign of civilization; an Oldsmobile parked fifty yards off, beneath the trees.

"JOYCE!" Lonnie called after her, laughing drunkenly. "Joyce, c'mon!"

When she neared the second car she came to her senses enough to realize that a couple was in this car. She stumbled and caught herself against the back fender, but got an eyeful of all the naked skin inside.

Chrissy Carpenter screamed and scrambled off of Jim Hopper who was wedged into the backseat with his pants around his ankles. His cock stood straight up, dark red and glistening.

Joyce screamed and covered her eyes, stumbled away with shouted apologies to the angry, swearing high school seniors. Her mind was spinning with the image.

"What the hell? Who are you? What are you doing?"

"I-I-I'm s-so-so---!" her lungs wouldn't inflate. She fell to the ground, clutching her chest and gasping.

Chrissy had gotten back into her dress, Jim had gotten his pants back up. They were both out of the car and trying to help her. They both smelled weird, like sweat and something else and they were so grown up with the way they took charge of the situation, determining that she was having an asthma attack. Chrissy stroked her back and Jim talked about loading her in the car and going to the hospital. But then Joyce mounted the fear and choked on breath until her throat and chest stopped burning.

By that point, Lonnie had come limping up in untied boots with his belt buckle still half undone. "Joyce, are you crazy? Why did you run off like that? We were having fun!"

Joyce sat crumpled in the grass with Chrissy's arm over her back. She savored each breath of sweet oxygen, as clouded with teenage musk as it was. Jim rose slowly from the squat he'd taken next to her. His narrowed eyes sized up Lonnie's boney frame and pimply face. "Byers, right? We have Ratcliff sixth period."

"Oh, yeah, man. How's it going?"

"You tell me. This girl just came screaming from your car. What the hell did you do to her?"

"Nothing," Lonnie said, taken aback.

"Yeah? Because she's scared half to death!" Jim said, advancing a step. Lonnie flinched. "We were fooling around, she wanted it!"

Chrissy had helped Joyce to her feet. Jim squinted at her. "That true? How old are you?"

"Fifteen," she squeaked, proud because ever since her birthday last week she hadn't had a chance to answer with that yet. Jim's jaw dropped and his nostrils flared.

"She's a damn kid, Byers. Shit! She doesn't know what she wants!"

Lonnie snapped. "Oh who are you her father? Stay out of this."

Chrissy gasped. Lonnie swore and reached for Joyce. "She has a thing with her nerves. It's nothing, right, Joyce?"

Knuckles cracked as Jim made fists and went for him. Lonnie tried to get away. They scuffled, with Jim dragging Lonnie by the shirt tail, slamming him against the car, and pinning him there. "Some kind of big man on campus, man. You can't get a girl your own age, you gotta take little girls?"

Hopper's weight rocked the car as he climbed in and it rocked Joyce from memory lane. He handed her a coke and some chips. She took

them with a blush still lingering from the memory. With hindsight, she could see that it had been plain as day what kind of guy Lonnie was--what kind of eighteen year old boy needed to date a girl fresh out of middle school?

She felt foolish for not seeing it, especially after having encountered Jim Hopper that night at the quarry; she should have taken the lesson then on what a real man was like. Instead, she had insisted to the frantic seniors trying to help her that Lonnie never hurt her, playing it all off as nerves, and she had allowed Lonnie to take her home.

When Lonnie had combed her hair and kissed her and sweetly apologized for upsetting her, she had believed he was as decent as they came and that Chrissy and Jim had blown the situation way out of proportion. And she continued to do that, taking Lonnie's side and allowing him to form her perceptions of others.

Now, Joyce could scoff at herself. She must have done so, because Jim looked over at her, "You okay?"

Tucking her hair behind an ear, she shrugged, "You ever looked all the way back at yourself as a dumb kid and think: if I'd been a little bit smarter then, I wouldn't be here now?"

"Every damn day," he returned.

"Lonnie Byers," she scoffed, saying it to herself more than anything, "Nice one, Joyce. Picked a great one."

Hopper frowned at her, "What's put him on your mind?"

"I guess I feel like I could have been a better mom if I had a good man to help me instead of Lonnie making everything so much worse."

"You *are* a good mother, Joyce," Hopper said firmly. "Whatever he said when he was here for the funeral--fuck him. Okay?"

Joyce sighed, closing her eyes, "I was home for six and a half hours, and Will wasn't there for any of it--Did I notice?"

"Joyce," Hopper reached over and took her hand, "You got home at

midnight. He's a good boy. You had no reason to think he wasn't in bed like always."

Joyce returned the gentle pressure from Hopper's big hand. "I guess..."

"Next time I see Lonnie Byers I'm clocking him in the nose," Hopper vowed.

"Don't," Joyce said, "I'm a big girl. I can handle him."

"I wasn't gonna do it for you. Just my own satisfaction."

Joyce chuckled, "Well I can't tell you what to do."

He shot a grin at her. They were still holding hands up to this point, but he let her go to have both hands on the wheel as he passed a dump truck.

"I'm sorry I bought into all his shit and picked his side all those times," Joyce said, referring to the handful of situations where Hopper and Lonnie had come to blows in high school, which had seemed to be every other week. "I didn't know the real you, and then I let Lonnie convince me you were some pig out to get him."

"No apology needed; I knew what was going on."

"I was a dumb love struck girl," Joyce confessed. "I'm not even sure it was real love, you know? I think it was just.... Imprinting. Like baby geese, you know? He was the first guy. The only guy. He said he loved me, and I believed him."

"Even after all his shit," Hopper shook his head, "Teenaged hearts astound me."

"That's the thing, though, he was an asshole to everyone, but not to *me* . He was only ever kind to me. He said the most romantic stuff, you know?" Joyce scoffed, "I thought I was marrying this misunderstood prince charming disguised as a bad boy."

Hopper laughed outright at this. Joyce covered her face in shame, "I know! I know! Blame my parents for dying before being a proper role

model for me.”

“Well that would be a rocky start for anyone,” Hopper said, “You were a kid that didn't know any better. It's easy for adults to mistake kindness for love so don't beat yourself up about it.”

“Yeah, we latch onto whatever kindness we can find and then we find out too late that kind words at the right time isn't enough,” Joyce said bitterly. “He borrowed all kinds of money and at *ridiculous* interest rates. He never once changed a diaper. He bounced from job to job. Cars were more important than the light bill.”

“What a dick,” Hopper said sincerely. Joyce burst out laughing, considering her recent memory.

“Yeah, but he was so nice. That's what I kept saying to myself. He's a good man. He treats me right. Ha! I finally realized actions speak louder than words and that he said all the same nice stuff to just about any idiot girl that would listen.” She harrumphed, “Still does.”

Hopper reached over and this time put his hand on her knee, “You got two great boys out of that mess though.”

Joyce's eyes burned, “Yeah,” she agreed but had to stop there because her lips wobbled. What if she only had one boy left now?

Hopper took an exit and made a few turns based on the directions scribbled on his hand and soon enough they pulled up to a modest house in a quiet neighborhood.

Hopper got out first and opened her door for her. He put his hand on her lower back and his lips glanced off her hair, “Let's get to the bottom of this and find Will, okay?”

Author's Note:

I tapped into a nerve writing this and need to say it one more time for all the younger readers:

Just a few years age difference is A LOT in the life of a teenager. It is NEVER okay for seniors to date freshmen. That's a grown, legal man dating a child.

Think twice and be safe.